

Desert Rifles

Issue 2

May 16, 2003

Assessing the Situation in Ar Ramadi

Story and photo
By Spc. Joe Niesen
350th MPAD

AR RAMADI, Iraq-In the aftermath of a war, it is often difficult for the surviving communities to recover. To combat this problem in Iraq, Army Civil Affairs groups are working with local communities to aid in reconstruction.

On May 9, 2003, personnel from the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, together with the Regimental Surgeon, Maj. Blake Graham, conducted an inventory of the hospitals in the city. The purpose of their visit was to gather information concerning the status of the Saddam General Hospital and the Maternity and Children's Hospital of Ar Ramadi.

"Ar Ramadi General was nothing new the junior staff who are running the facilities simply used us as a sounding board," said Graham.

Many doctors throughout Iraq are facing an increased number of patients with a decreased supply of medicine, equipment, funding and manpower. Thus, many hospitals which were completely reliant upon government aid during the reign of former President Saddam Hussein are confused about where to look for support.

"They have to understand that security is the most important thing we can do now, so that non-governmental agencies will come into the region and actually help," explained Graham.

Another detriment to the reconstruction of Iraq's hospitals is a loss of communication and trust in the government that began after the war.

Many of the nation's hospitals are functioning independently of each other and fighting over what supplies are available.

While the United States has overseen the appointment of a new Minister of Health for the country, many doctors do not know of his existence.

Graham added that the goal of the U.S. government is to help the people of Iraq return to a self sufficient state in which they will be able to function with minimal outside aid.

Thus, the coalition forces in



DOING THE ROUNDS---Maj. Graham tours the Ar Ramadi General Hospital with members of the staff.

the area have provided security for the facilities in their area as part of their efforts to strengthen local hospitals. The presence of soldiers is designed to help deter looting, which has all but exhausted an already limited number of supplies.

"We have the security, but the necessities have not arrived. There are no supplies in this country," said Dr. Mohammed Hassan Al Am, a doctor at Ar Ramadi General.

Dr. Hassan's comments were echoed by his colleagues. A lack of supplies, understaffing and outdated facilities and equipment are deficiencies reported by nearly all of the hospitals in the region. Ar Ramadi General Hospital is currently supporting the entire region.

Doctors in the region are frustrated at the situation in which they currently find themselves and only wish to continue their duties to the community.

"Before, there was no concern for science, education or life, only fighting," commented Dr. Bassam, a specialist at the Ar Ramadi Maternity and Children's Hospital.

"We are in a very difficult time now, things will get better, but it will take time," said Dr. Saad M. Mutter, an ear, nose and throat specialist visiting the Maternity Hospital.

"I am quite confident that the end result will be better than what they had. It will be a long slow process and they will have to learn to work under a new system," said Graham.

The ultimate outcome of this period of reconstruction will depend upon the ability of each side to work with and understand the other.

As time progresses, so will the quality of life for the people of Ar Ramadi.

In This Issue:

- 2/5 FA makes sure food arrives safely
- Couples in Iraq
- Waves in the 16 Sig Motor Pool
- Worldwide news and The Question of the week

Healthy Tips for Healthy Troopers

From the Desk of the Regimental Surgeon, Maj. Blake Graham

I'm an "Indiana Jones" kind of guy. I hate snakes. You surely remember the movie and you may also remember that the setting was not that far from here (though the reality of it may have been). There are enough snakes in the world that Iraq would end up with some. Many of them are probably not significant from the standpoint of risk, but some are quite seri-

ous. Among the venomous snakes of the world, vipers (same group as rattlesnakes) rank pretty highly. Some cobras rank highly also. Needless to say that Iraq has both of these. Rather than attempt to make us all herpetological experts, prevention needs the attention. Keep your living areas free of food and trash so you don't attract the things that attract the snakes. If you do come upon a snake, don't assume it is there to make friends or wants to play. It is probably much less interested in you than you

are in it. Leave it alone and it will go away (this assumes you followed the first recommendation). If it poses immediate risk to personnel, kill it quickly with a shovel or some instrument (other than a firearm), then get rid of it without touching it. A significant number of people get bitten each year by dead, even decapitated, snakes. If someone is bitten, don't do movie medicine where you cut and bite ("I saw this in a movie once"). Identifying the snake is very helpful but don't waste time chasing the snake. Get the victim to a hospital immediately. Call ahead to let them know you are coming so they can get some snake antivenin.

**Story by
Spc. Joe Niesen
350th MPAD**

RIFLES BASE, Iraq-The soldiers at Ar Ramadi's Northern Palace have literally been getting down and dirty. The dust and grime disturbed while transforming the ruins of a presidential palace into living and working areas has proven equally as hard to remove from the troops.

Baby wipes and moist towelettes have had to replace approved water sources and many soldiers are running short on supplies.

Well, relief is here. Members of the 89th Regimental Chemical Shop were busy last week erecting a field shower area for Rifles Base and now open for business.

The showers are fed by two 2000-gallon water blivets double sanitized through the use of chlorine and heat to provide a healthy and hot means for soldiers to get rid of the grease and grime.

"Every day things get a little better," says Staff Sgt. Milton Smith.

The showers are conveniently located on the river walk near the guest houses. There are separate hours for male and female access posted along with the rules for use of the facilities.

"It sure beats the heck out of baby wipes," comments Spc. Jared Hopkins of the 502nd Personnel Support Battalion. He, like many of the other soldiers located at the palace, is looking forward to a chance to wash the remnants of the past few days away.

Shower Times

Posted by Maj. Andrae Brooks
Mayor, Rifles Base

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
0900-1200 hrs	0900-1200 hrs	0900-1200 hrs
1700-2000 hrs	1700-2000 hrs	1700-2000 hrs

Female times: 1100-1200 hrs and 1900-2000 hrs.

Regimental Reflections-

By Chaplain (Maj.) Christopher Faria,
Regimental Chaplain

Verse 10 (Deuteronomy 32:10) says that "God watched over them as His most precious possession, like an eagle that rouses her chicks." Here's the point- God took care of them the people of Israel. It is very easy to sense the need for God's protection and care in moments of danger, despair or loneliness. But it is easy to get into a routine and simply neglect God. No one wants to be used: to appeal to God when you're afraid then neglect Him when you no longer sense danger.

Deuteronomy 32:15

But Israel soon became fat and unruly;
the people grew heavy, plump, and stuffed!
Then they abandoned the God who had made them;
they made light of the Rock of their salvation.

Did you catch that? They made light of the Rock of their salvation. To make "light" of literally means "to wither, dishonor, disparage." And there is a deep price to pay for growing cold towards God. Ignoring God is like living in an interpersonal desert. So how do you honor God?

John 14:21

Jesus said, "Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them, and I will love them. And I will reveal myself to each one of them."

The soldier who honors him shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water, whose 'leaf does not wither' (same word, Ps.1:3). Want to be successful in the desert? Honor God by being obedient to Him.

Couples Deploy, Hardships Felt in Iraq

Story and photo

By Sgt. 1st Class Gary L. Qualls Jr.
Regimental Public Affairs

Family separation is a way of life in the military. Stretched out by real-world missions throughout the globe, military couples are often separated by sometimes an ocean or two. Some couples, however, face a different challenge.

They may be only an hour or so away from one another, but they have their own unique trials and joys, their own way of coping with difficult marital and family circumstances. These are dual military couples assigned in the same theater of operations.

Dual military couples in the same theater may be closer geographically to their spouses, but that's no guarantee they'll get to see them much more often. Even if they do, they say it's a torturous tease.

"I'm only one hour away and I've only seen her once in five months," said Sgt. 1st Class Scott Grim, a combat engineer in Regimental Headquarters, Headquarters Troop, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Grim and his wife, Sgt. Betsy Grim, an administrative specialist in 43rd Area Support Group, were separated when she was deployed with her unit in January. The one time Grim did get to see his wife since then made it even harder.

"It would have been better if I didn't go because I missed her even more," he said.

Staff Sgt. Kindra Pemwell, an information systems specialist with RHHT, 3d ACR, is able to call her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Dan Pemwell, supply noncommissioned officer in charge in 1st Battalion, 68th Armor, 4th Infantry Division, nearly every day, which provides a "nice pick me up," but she hasn't seen him once since they each deployed last month.

A bad memory she has of the couple's situation is arriving at Camp Victory in Kuwait, not being sure whether her husband's unit had departed already for Iraq, and desperately looking for him at the dining facility.

"I remember going to the chow hall every day, looking at every face hoping I'd see him," she said. "Wanting to see him so bad and never making that connection - it's frustrating."

Sgt. Jason Wolfe's job allows him to see his wife, Staff Sgt. Melissa Wolfe, communications platoon sergeant, RHHT, 3d ACR, nearly every day, but the situation doesn't allow them to be themselves, she said.

The possibility of seeing her husband makes Sgt. Annette Robinson, Prescribed Load List NCOIC, RHHT, 3d ACR, feel better, she said.

Robinson was able to have "one great, uninterrupted" conversation with her husband, Sgt. Tremetrius Robinson, a Bradley gunner in Lightning Troop, 3rd Squadron, 3d ACR.

"Just sitting with him made me happy," Robinson said, adding that one conversation has been something to hang onto to help see her through this deployment.

When both husband and wife deploy it is a weightier situation than when just one marriage partner goes because, if they have children, both the mother and father are now out of the home. It's also more stressful because without a strong family support system, there's nobody to handle the day-to-day affairs back home.

"It takes extraordinary planning," Pemwell said. "We paid our bills a year in advance," she said.

Like couples separated between home station and the theater of operation, dual military couples deployed to the same theater have



WOLFE'S IN IRAQ--- Sgt. Jason Wolfe and his wife Staff Sgt. Melissa Wolfe are a couple lucky enough to see each other often.

difficult situations and occasions to endure.

The Grims missed celebrating their anniversary, her birthday and, likely, his birthday, together. Due to frequent deployments, their 17-month-old daughter doesn't know who her mother is, Grim commented.

The Robinsons' daughter will graduate from high school this month and neither one of them will be there for it.

Still, the brief and sometimes seldom visits and plans for life after the deployment keep them going. Some of the couples are planning vacations after their deployments.

The Grims are planning a real wedding with all the frills, as opposed to the quick, unceremonious knot-tying affair they had in Denmark.

And there's something else that keeps them going, Robinson said.

"Sometimes when I look at these kids (Iraqi children), I know we're doing some good here. I know we're helping them out," Robinson said. "That makes my family and me feel better about our situation."

2-5 FA Security Ensures Iraq Gets Food from UN

Story and photo

By **Spc. Justin A. Carmack**
350th MPAD

AR RAMADI, Iraq-As the war efforts come to an end, more missions tasked to soldiers will be humanitarian based. Members of the 2-5 Field Artillery are already playing an important role in the humanitarian efforts here in Iraq.

They are working to provide security to convoys containing food for the United Nations humanitarian relief as well as security duties at the U.N. food storage point in Ar Ramadi.

The U.N. food program was implemented in 1996 and has been in place in Iraq since it began.

The program continues to progress as war efforts wind to a close. As days pass, food continues to role in under the watch of soldiers.

"Our soldiers are pulling security for the facility as well as convoys. It is our responsibility to make sure that food gets to where it needs to be," said 1st Lt. Robert Pratt of the 2-5 FA.

The food brought in by the UN arrives at a port and is then transported to storage facilities.

Along the route, soldiers of the 2-5th FA act as escorts to ensure the safe arrival of the foods to a storage facility in Al Ramadi.

"It is not the job we thought we were going to have. But our soldiers are proud that they are doing something good for the people of Iraq," said Pratt.

The Ar Ramadi site is continuously receiving shipments of food which will later be distributed to the residents after clearance is received from U.N. officials in Baghdad.

U.N. official Saad Jumana Farhan added, "Recent food shipments have contained a variety of foods such as flour, rice, vegetable oil and lintels. We are expecting other foods to arrive later."

Citizens from Al Fallujah to Al Qaim will

receive provisions from this storage site.

The amount of supplies in which each family will receive is determined by the number of beneficiaries within the family. Once food reaches the families, the job of



PLANNING--- U.N. official Saad Jumana Farhan and 1st Lt. Robert Pratt of the 2-5th FA discuss distribution.

U.N. and the 2-5th FA is finished.

"U.S. soldiers and our people have a competitive and friendly relationship," said Farhan. "We are happy to work with the soldiers."

Making Waves in the Motor Pool

Story and photo

By **Spc. Samuel M. Castro**
16th Signal Battalion

RIFLES BASE, Iraq-The Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 16th Signal Battalion, Motor Pool, is busy these days. Mechanics can be seen perched at precarious angles on the engines of Humvees as they struggle to get at recessed parts, or taking advice as they troubleshoot generators.

MAKING WAVES--- Staff Sgt. Zubik, Spc. Blankenship, Sgt. Neely, Spc. Tullier are caught taking a break.



"We do more with fewer personnel than any company in 16th," boasts Sgt. Edmond Neely.

"All our training is on-the-job, there's no such thing as a classroom," confesses Spc. Jacob Tullier, one of the HHC mechanics.

These mechanics have taken the term "train as you fight" to the highest level by seeking out instances in which young soldiers can learn new skills by encountering new situations.

On a recent recovery mission of a rolled vehicle, a few of the mechanics were unfamiliar with the wrecker vehicle and its equipment. Rather than simply take control of the vehicle, Staff Sgt. John Zubik, HHC Motor Pool noncommissioned officer in charge, made the decision to rally all the troops and give a class on the equipment in question. The soldiers were then able to continue the mission without losing pace.

"If there was one thing I'd recommend to operators, it's to read your TM," asserts Tullier, "It has everything you really need in order to make both my and your job easier."

"If I had to focus on one thing," Neely adds just prior to pointing out a page in a TM, "it would have to be tires, they get overlooked a lot."

The mechanics of HHC 16th Signal are a rare breed of gung-ho soldiers and dedicated professionals, intent on two things. The accomplishment of their mission, and teaching as much as they can are the standards set by Zubik.

(Spc. Samuel M. Castro is a designated Unit Public Affairs Representative with HHC, 16th Sig. Bn.)

Sports Wrap-Up

Since no one has seen the late local news, here's a look at the latest standings in the world of major sports.

NASCAR Winston Cup Standings

1.	Matt Kenseth	1619 pts.	1 Win
2.	Dale Earnhardt Jr.	1599 pts.	3 Wins
3.	Kurt Busch	1452 pts.	2 Wins
4.	Jeff Gordon	1441 pts.	1 Win
5.	Bobby Labonte	1376 pts.	1 Win
6.	Jimmie Johnson	1372 pts.	0 Wins
7.	Michael Waltrip	1361 pts.	1 Win
8.	Kevin Harvick	1328 pts.	0 Wins
9.	Rusty Wallace	1274 pts.	0 Wins
10.	Sterling Marlin	1259 pts.	0 Wins

Major League Baseball

National League

East

Atlanta
Montreal (-2)
Phil. (-5)
Florida (-9 ½)
New York (-10)

Central

Chicago
Cincinnati (-2 ½)
Houston (-2 ½)
St. Louis (-4)
Pittsburgh (-7 ½)
Milwaukee (-10 ½)

West

San Francisco
Los Angeles (-5)
Colorado (-6 ½)
Arizona (-6 ½)
San Diego (-12)

American League

East

New York
Boston (-1)
Toronto (-7 ½)
Baltimore (-8)
Tampa Bay (-11)

Central

Kansas City
Minnesota (-1 ½)
Chicago (-4 ½)
Cleveland (-11)
Detroit (-13 ½)

West

Oakland
Seattle (even)
Anaheim (-4 ½)
Texas (-8)

NBA Conference Playoffs

Eastern Conference Semifinals

Boston Celtics vs. New Jersey Nets

New Jersey won the series 4-0

Game 1- New Jersey 97, Boston 93

Game 2- New Jersey 104, Boston 95

Game 3- New Jersey 94, Boston 76

Game 4- New Jersey 110, Boston 101 (2 OT)

Philadelphia 76ers vs. Detroit Pistons

Detroit leads series 3-2

Game 1- Detroit 98, Philadelphia 87

Game 2- Detroit 104, Philadelphia 97 (OT)

Game 3- Philadelphia 93, Detroit 83

Game 4- Philadelphia 95, Detroit 82

Game 5- Detroit 78, Philadelphia 77

Western Conference Semifinals

Los Angeles Lakers vs. San Antonio Spurs

San Antonio won the series 4-2

Game 1- San Antonio 87, Los Angeles 82

Game 2- San Antonio 114, Los Angeles 95

Game 3- Los Angeles 110, San Antonio 95

Game 4- Los Angeles 99, San Antonio 95

Game 5- San Antonio 96, Los Angeles 94

Game 6- San Antonio 110, Los Angeles 82

Dallas Mavericks vs. Sacramento Kings

Series tied 3-3

Game 1- Sacramento 124, Dallas 113

Game 2- Dallas 132, Sacramento 110

Game 3- Dallas 141, Sacramento 137 (2 OT)

Game 4- Sacramento 99, Dallas 83

Game 5- Dallas 112, Sacramento 93

Game 6- Sacramento 115, Dallas 109

NHL Conference Finals

Eastern Conference Finals

New Jersey Devils vs. Ottawa Senators

Series tied 1-1

Game 1- Ottawa 3, New Jersey 2 (OT)

Game 2- New Jersey 4, Ottawa 1

Western Conference Finals

Anaheim Mighty Ducks vs. Minnesota Wild

Anaheim leads series 3-0

Game 1- Anaheim 1, Minnesota 0 (2 OT)

Game 2- Anaheim 2, Minnesota 0

Game 3- Anaheim 4, Minnesota 0

The Back Page...

Driver Charged in 18 Texas Truck Deaths---

A New York-based truck driver was charged in federal court with transporting illegal immigrants after 18 members of a group abandoned inside a semitrailer at a Texas truck stop died. Thus far, these are the only charges filed against the driver.

Retired Priest Pleads Guilty to Charge---

A retired priest pleaded guilty to promoting prostitution involving a boy in the only criminal case involving a priest to come out of an investigation of sex abuse allegations in the Cleveland diocese of the Roman Catholic Church.

Rock All Night With The Stones---

The Rolling Stones will be allowed to play until nearly midnight at Berlin's Olympic stadium in July, a Berlin court ruled, turning down a complaint from local residents who argued that the noise would be unbearable.

Fox To Bring More "Reality" To It's New Season---

Fox will bring back a new "Joe Millionaire" next season. The network is also planning to start a junior version of "American Idol" as well as a new drama about the porn industry.

Rodney King Charged With DUI, PCP Use---

Rodney King, whose videotaped beating at the hands of Los Angeles police led to widespread riots more than a decade ago, was charged with three misdemeanor counts stemming from an April automobile accident, authorities said.

Actor Stack Dies At 84---

Robert Stack, an actor known for his roles in "The Untouchables", "Airplane!" and as the host of "Unsolved Mysteries" died at his home in Los Angeles at the age of 84. Stack, who underwent radiation therapy for prostate cancer,

passed away due to heart failure.

Four Palestinians Killed in Gaza---

Israeli troops raided a town in northern Gaza as Palestinians marked "Naqba Day", the anniversary of their displacement during the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, with marches and a three-minute siren. Four Palestinians, two gunman and two boys, ages 12 and 15, were killed in the military strike. The operation, one of the largest in recent months, came two days before the first Israeli-Palestinian summit since 2000, and a week ahead of talks between Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and President George W. Bush on a new peace plan.

Tom Sizemore Charged With Abusing Fleiss---

More allegations of violence followed Tom Sizemore when prosecutors charged the 41-year-old actor with hitting, harassing and threatening his ex-fiancee Heidi Fleiss over the past year. Sizemore claims the allegations are false.

Air Force Cadet Denies Rape Charges---

An incident at The Air Force Academy in Colorado has one cadet

under fire for allegedly raping a female classmate. The two were in his dorm room drinking shots of tequila when the alleged rape took place.

Two Charged in USS Cole Bombing---

Two men, described as al-Qaida members, were charged with helping plan the attack on the USS Cole that killed 17 American sailors in 2000. More court papers revealing new details about one of the deadliest terror strikes against the U.S. military.

"The Matrix Reloaded" opens---

All across the country fans flock to see the sequel to 1999's blockbuster. The third in the series is scheduled for release later this year.

Question of the Week:

How many hands high is the RCO, Col. Teeples?

Submit answers to: RCSM Caldwell in writing with name, rank and section.



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